

choice in the matter. In the minute that I will stand before Members this morning, we will accrue almost \$1 million in interest to our public debt. These are wasted dollars paying interest on debt, rather than paying down the debt.

Today the national debt is \$6 trillion. Since January of last year, the CBO baseline's projected net interest payments over the 2002 to 2011 period have gone up by \$1 trillion, from \$620 billion to \$1.6 trillion, roughly \$10,000 per American household and \$1,000 per household per year.

If we make the tax cut permanent, like some have suggested, this number rises to almost \$4,000 per household per year. This is insanity. Mr. Speaker, I ask that we remember the words of Thomas Jefferson.

OPPOSE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 87 AND STOP THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, today we will be deciding whether to ship high-level nuclear waste, one of the most dangerous and deadly substances known to man, across this great country by and through our roads and neighborhoods and schools and parkways.

Mr. Speaker, today we must reject this dangerous plan. Whatever Members believe, let us look at some of the startling facts.

According to the Department of Transportation itself, there have been over 11,000 train accidents in the past 5 years. It is estimated that at least one train accident occurs every 24 hours. Since 1998, 3,800 people have lost their lives and more than 45,000 people have been injured in train accidents in the United States alone. Just imagine how many more people would die or could have been injured had these trains been carrying high-level nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain.

Mr. Speaker, it takes only one anti-tank missile or one terrorist act to cause a catastrophic nuclear disaster, but today we can prevent that disaster. We can oppose House Joint Resolution 87 and stop the Yucca Mountain project now before we endanger the lives of thousands of innocent Americans.

URGING MEMBERS TO PASS STRONGEST POSSIBLE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR AMERICA'S WORKERS

(Mr. SMITH of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, the Senate is considering the President's request for trade promotional authority right now, and at the same time, connected to it, trade

adjustment assistance, help for workers who have lost their jobs.

I rise today to urge the Senate today to pass the strongest possible trade adjustment assistance packages. Workers desperately need help dealing with the new economy. It is a land of opportunity for all of us, but there are also challenges. Workers must continually have access to training and education to update their skills. They also need the health care benefits necessary to carry them during periods of unemployment, and they also need income assistance to help them as they move forward and try to find new jobs.

I am a strong supporter of trade. As a new Democrat, it is one of our top priority issues to open trade throughout the world and give us access to other markets.

Connected to that, however, we have to help the workers of our country deal with the challenges and opportunities that come along with that. There must be a strong health care component. There must be job training and education available.

If the Senate were to put together that type of package and pass a trade promotional assistance bill with a strong trade adjustment assistance piece, I am very confident they would be able to pass it in the House, and they would move forward on two critical policies for this country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded it is improper to urge action by the other body.

WESTERN SAHARA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, last week the United Nations considered a new solution to the conflict over Western Sahara, a solution which basically gives Morocco control over Western Sahara.

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows the Moroccan people do not have a democracy. The country is ruled by a king. They use torture in their prisons. The former king, father of the current king, established the notorious and hideously brutal Tazmamart prison camp in which he imprisoned and tortured his own family members. So how in the world will Morocco assure that democracy is protected for the Sahrawis?

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disturbed by reports that our U.S. Government now may be willing to throw away the rights of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination by supporting Moroccan claims of sovereignty to the land. It seems that our government is willing to bargain away fundamental human rights for cooperation with current agendas, after 10 years of advocating self-determination for Western Sahara.

When our country no longer cares about the right to self-determination, a right on which our Nation was founded, it is a sad day, indeed.

Mr. Speaker, this is a dangerous time to play with instability, particularly in North Africa.

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PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARE BENEFIT

(Mr. RODRIGUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that our citizens are still without workable prescription drug coverage. Because of the rapid increase of prescription drug use, as we know, it is critical and needed; and at the time we established Medicare, prescriptions were not used as much, but now we understand that those senior citizens do need prescription drugs to be able to take care of their illnesses. We need to be there for them to make sure that we will get that prescription. It is unfortunate, but I keep hearing stories about our senior citizens that continue to make decisions between buying food and buying prescription that they need. I hear from the spouses where they sometimes go without prescriptions to get their husbands their prescriptions.

We as a community and as Americans need to make sure that our seniors have accessible prescription drug coverage. And as Democrats we support a prescription drug benefit coverage for all seniors that would be voluntary and be able to have access to them. No seniors should be faced with the prospects of not being able to afford medicine, regardless of income. We need to be there for our seniors. They have been there for us.

STOP TAXING MILITARY STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENTS

(Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, our military uses students loan repayment to recruit for shortages in critical military occupational specialties such as the Medical Corps. If you are on active duty, tuition assistance is not taxed as income. If you have been honorably discharged and received education assistance through the GI bill, it is not taxed as income. However, if the military needs to recruit an individual for an occupational specialty that is needed, the student loan repayment is taxed as income.

For example, if the military pay is \$24,000 per year and he or she receives \$20,000 that year to pay a student loan, they are taxed at an income level of \$44,000 and the tax payment has to come out of a \$24,000 salary.